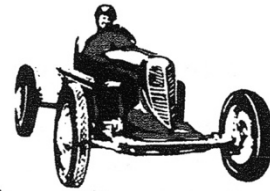


# GOLDEN WHEELS

FRATERNITY  
*Auto Racing Pathfinders*



*Museum Pieces In Action*

Issue #1 – 2024

**President's Message:** I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year and hope your Christmas and holiday season was filled with much joy.

At the recent breakfast meeting, there was support for having a get together in the spring, like we did last year. Not quite a banquet, as we have no formal awards or accolades to give out, just a gathering of members and friends with like interests, and longstanding friendships. So, with that said, Kay and I have secured Saturday, March 10th. at the 125th. St. Grill at 1pm for the get together. Please note, that this is the first day of Daylight-Saving Time, so everyone can get home safely in daylight. Last year's buffet was very popular, so we are planning a similar meal. I will get back to you in mid- February with a menu, and price.

Now, here's the annual reminder that dues are due. Last year a number of long-time members (forgot) to renew their memberships. We continued to send newsletters to those on that list. I've instructed George to send you this newsletter as a gentle reminder. (No names will be mentioned, but you know who you are).

Look forward to seeing you at the next breakfast meeting, and if not, surely on March 10th. *Hal*

While browsing through facebook postings a few days ago I came upon the following story. Since it was about Aurora Speedway, Playland Amusement Park and Golden Wheels I thought it might be of interest to the members. And since it was posted by Kay Schlegel, I figured I could get away with including it in the newsletter. It was originally printed in the Everett Herald newspaper. Enjoy.

**Speedway Memories** - Amy Daybert Enterprise editor. Tuesday, March 4, 2008 7:01 am

Hal Schlegel of Seattle remembers listening to the music of the carousel at Playland Amusement p\Park and the squeal of tires from the Aurora Speedway off of 130th St. and Aurora Ave. when he was only 3-years old. As a teenager from 1957 to 1959, he got within closer range of the same sounds and attractions, by working as a brake man at the amusement park, making it possible for ride operators to eat meals. Although the racetrack was closed for good in 1958 after opening in 1938, many race car drivers, including driver Mel Anthony - and Clark Gable - raced along the Arora Speedway track.

Tomorrow, June 16, race car drivers and enthusiasts can attend "The History of Racing on Aurora" from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the parking lot of the Shoreline Historical Museum, 749 N. 175th St. The free event is in partnership with the Golden Wheels Fraternity.

"Aurora has a lot to do with the formation of the Golden Wheels Fraternity," Schlegel, now the vice president of the club said.

The nonprofit organization organized in 1975 by six original racers and their wives, was formed when member Pike green noticed the only time the drivers really got together was at someone's funeral. Members of the club encourage the preservation and sport of auto racing, provide financial assistance to drivers and their families and race and show midget race cars.

Schlegel's parents were not avid fans of racing, he said, so he rarely got to visit the Aurora Speedway track. That track opened as the Playland dog racetrack in 1933 but closed in 1935 following pressures from those who were involved in the business of racing horses. Although he said he's a "newcomer to the sport" who belongs to the fan category of racing Schlegel, owns two 1946 Solar Midget race cars.

"I couldn't wait to have a car to play with," Schlegel said. When the restoration of the first car he bought from a former club member was taking too long he got himself a second car. He predicts that next year will be the first time the "basket-case" car he bought five years ago sees the track.

He said finding parts for his classic cars is "virtually impossible" and must go to South Everett to find methanol for his cars to run on.

Schlegel became a member of golden wheels fraternity in 2000 but has been a member of the Shoreline Historical Museum for a dozen years. He met with museum director Vicki Stiles about a Playland Amusement Park exhibit before he knew the museum existed.

"I told Vicki that I am an ex-Playland employee and that I would help with the exhibit," Schlegel said. "I told her about my passion for reconstructing that era."

Stiles told Schlegel about a woman who first approached her about building a Playland exhibit at museum. Schlegel and his wife, Kay, the woman Stiles referred to, were married at the Shoreline Historical Museum.

The annual event will include the screening of a film about Playland and Aurora Speedway and one of the first cars from the Red Bug Ride where miniature battery-powered cars drove along a pretend highway. Children will have the opportunity to sit in the exhibit cars and photos are encouraged.

A special Playland reunion in honor of Bonnie Duncan Nelson is scheduled for 3 p.m. directly following the exhibit. Nelson had close ties to Playland as her family lived nearby and worked at the amusement park.

"(Playland) was once a huge part of the local life around here," Stiles said. "If you didn't work there, you weren't there for entertainment."

Racing memorabilia, programs and trophies are part of the Playland exhibit at the Shoreline Historical Museum.

An interesting story. Thanks Kay.

I'm sure everyone knows of Dan Blair's talented ability to restore racecars, but I'm not sure everyone is aware of his hydroplane boat restoration experience. To bring you all up to date, Dan has provided me with the story and some photos on his restoration of an outboard hydroplane he brought back to life. Photos from start to finished inserted. Enjoy

### OUTBOARD HYDROPLANE



Now I am a person who never had any desire to own a boat, race cars yes, boats, airplanes, motorcycles all the same, no way. I enjoy watching the hydros and motorcycles race but to own any of them, not a chance. But here is where the story begins.

As some of you know I work as a volunteer wine maker at E.B. Foote Winery. One day while I was talking with one of the other volunteers, I was telling him about my hobby restoring vintage race cars. Well not to be out done he told me he raced Outboard Hydroplanes back in the '50's when he was a little younger, (well... a lot younger), then he went on to say "I still have one of my original hydros hanging in my garage. It has been there for probably 30 years now". He also said the boat spent about fifteen years or so in his father's garage in Renton, WA where he built it. When his father passed away, while he and family members were cleaning out the house, his brother said. "What do you want to do with your old hydro", and Larry said, "take it to the dump, I don't want it", but his brother said, "no we can't do that, let's take it to your place and hang it in your garage".

I said to him. "You know Larry, there is someone in this world who would probably like to have a hydro like that just as a project to restore". He said, "Well if you know who that person would be, I will give it



to them just to get it out of my garage". Then the wheels began to slowly turn and I said, "I think I know of someone who would like it for that price, and he is sitting right here".

A week or two later I drove over to his home just to take a look and see if it was what I remembered. Sure enough, there it was hanging up in the rafters of his garage. That little hydro had never been touched since it's last race. Then around his house we went to another garage where he showed me the engine that went with it.

A couple weeks later he called to say he and some friends had the boat down from the rafters and it was ready to be picked up whenever I could come over. A few days later I called one of my vintage race car friends, and asked if he would like to come over and give me a hand picking up a new project I acquired. We drove over to Larry's home in the pouring rain and there it sat in his back yard with a blue tarp over it, truly a barn fresh find. Before loading the boat Larry made sure I understood the conditions of taking the boat was that I never put it in the water and try to run it. Being it is fifty years old and has never seen water in the last forty-five plus years, who knows what could happen. Well, that was easy for me to agree to because I don't know anything about boats or water. Really his concern was that I might hurt myself or tear the boat up.

Since I don't have a canopy on the back of my truck on the way home the boat got wet, Jim told me not to worry, boats are supposed to get wet. Arriving home I had my rolling chassis building table set up in the garage already for its' new occupant. Jim and I slid the one-hundred-pound boat off the truck onto the table. While unloading I noticed a few rat droppings but didn't think much of it until I went back into the garage a couple hours later. Upon opening the door into the garage, I smelled a terrible odor that wasn't there before the boat was, looking closer into the boat I realized there wasn't just a few rat droppings, back under the hull it was covered. Now at the sight of this I no longer considered them rat droppings, now it was just plain old rat s--t. As the old expression goes, that stuff doesn't stink until you stir it, and the wet ride home must have stirred it up real good.

My wife wasn't exactly ecstatic about me bringing home another project to go along with my two midget race cars. I knew if she came out to the garage and got a whiff of that odor, which was covering the garage, not only would the hydro be history, but I may be also. About all I could do was get it out of there and turn on some fans. Now it took both Jim and I to slide it off the truck onto the table, but in this case I was able to get it off the table by myself, stand it up on its' stern and walk it around to the north side of my garage (you don't know how hard it is to walk a boat that far while holding your breath) and stand it up under the eave and get some visqueen to cover it. A few days later it quit raining and I thought the boat should be dry enough by now so maybe I can take my shop vac and clean out the rat stuff. I put on my painters' mask, rubber gloves, covered my head and put on some dirty coveralls, as you know people have been poisoned by inhaling the fumes of rat stuff, yes it can be dangerous. Well the more I vacuumed, the worse the smell got plus I uncovered a dead rat. The smell must have even

been too much for him. Before I finished I must of taken out about three gallons of that rat stuff. Next day I went out to see what a great job I did and every time I shook or pounded on the boat more would fall out along with moss, twigs, pieces of visqueen and various other pieces of nest making material. I didn't want to get the inside wet again but at this point it was either honor Larry's original wishes of taking it to the dump or get out my pressure washer. After about ten hours or more of cleaning and drying and cleaning more it started smelling a little better, then it was off to the pet store to buy a gallon of pet odor remover spray that is used on carpeting, ... yep used it all.

Well, I felt by now it was safe to take back into the garage where I started removing the varnish on the deck and hull with paint remover and sanding till I had it down to bare wood.

When I asked Larry how he painted the boat in 1958 he said. "Simple I went over to McLendon Hardware and bought a can of spar varnish and a brush then painted it the way we all did back then". If it was brush painted, then I decided it would be brush painted again as this is a restoration of an existing boat not a recreation of an old boat with a few of the original parts.

As long as this boat was in such sound shape, and I was only going to give it a cosmetic restoration I didn't have to tear off any of the eighth inch mahogany decking or rebuild any structural parts. When I turned it over to refinish the quarter inch plywood bottom of the hull, I noticed much of it was black, so I asked Larry what that was and he told me they used to rub Graphite into the varnish to slicken the running surface. That part I left alone and only varnished the sponsons to a high gloss with three coats.

Now it was off to my friend Don Kelson Hydros and have him spray the inside of the boat as I couldn't reach all the nooks and crannies with a brush. With a good coat of primer and a couple coats of enamel there is no smell left. Darn I sure (don't) miss that smell.

There are no screws in the boat, all construction was done with brass barbed nails and glue. The engine has roller rod bearings.

Along the side of the right sponson there was some damage to the molding, I decided to leave as is, only to show it has seen some close racing in its' time, also a little patina doesn't hurt anything.

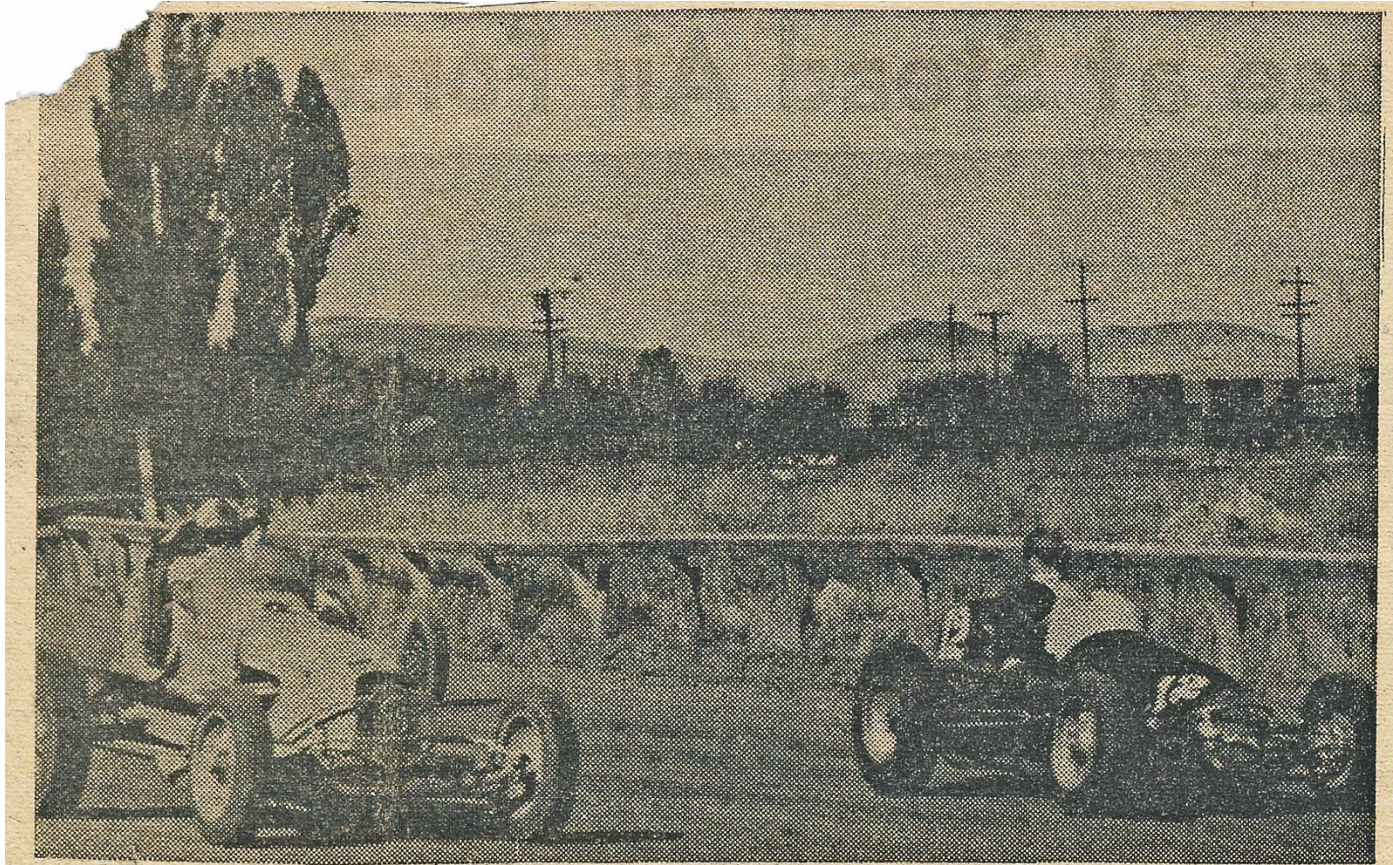
The hull was built by Loren (Larry) Erickson. The engine is a Champion "Hot Rod" manufactured in Wisconsin, 20cu.in. and about 15hp. 2-cylinder 2 cycle. Prop is polished brass and the engine has only been repainted to match the original blue color. All hardware has been polished or painted to match original color. The interior and numbers were re-painted the original yellow. The boat is 9' 4" long, 56" wide and the weight is about 125 lbs. It was raced as a B stock hydro. No. 132R. R stands for professional. Larry claims top speed was only around 65 mph.



And there you have it.

Sometime in the first half of 2023 I received an email, from John Gregg I believe, that I copied and saved with no notations. In it was the following info: "Del McClure of Portland, is the oldest permanent member of USAC. Del won the Silver Crown championship with Mike Bliss in the ninety's. Bob Gregg, and Mike Gregg are both in the National Midge Hall of Fame along with other NW drivers Allen Heath, Len Sutton, Jack Turner, Shorty Templeman, and Don Edmunds. Bob wasn't known for his Sprint car racing away from the Northwest."

While going through a Golden Wheels storage box looking for something to fill out the newsletter, I found the clipping below in a large envelope holding many newspaper clippings from California. No information. Seeing Bob Gregg's name got my attention and at first glance I thought it was Yakima, but realized the background hills were not Yakima's. If you can add additional info, please let me know



**ON AGAIN SUNDAY**—Scenes such as this, taken in the 1951 big car race at the rodeo grounds here, will be repeated tomorrow as top drivers start a 100-miler on the big mile track. The shot above shows Bob Gregg, left, winner of the 1951 race and a favorite in tomorrow's, leading the way out of the north turn at high speed.

**BIRTHDAYS!!** –It's a new year and time to post the first member birthdays of 2024. Finishing another lap in January are: William Blackwell, Dave Craver & Prez Hal Schlegel. Evidently no member was born (or won't admit it) in February. Deanna Williams, Ralph Hunt and Donald Kane will celebrate in March. **Happy Birthday to All and Very Best Wishes for the coming year!**

**Passings:** I have received the news that former Golden Wheels long time member Mike Morrissey passed away December 24, 2023. Mike had owned an Olds powered late 60's Sprint Roadster built with Jack Klingbeil. Rest In Peace, Mike.

**Don't Forget Breakfast:** Our Saturday Morning Breakfast at Shay's in Shoreline are still on. The usual GW business reports, updates on what everyone has been doing and lots of storytelling and reminiscing. As usual, the meeting starts at 9:00 am but you can come early and stay late if you so wish.

Hope everyone made it through the rain snow and freezing temps that came to visit the Northwest without suffering any weather-related problems. I'm sure we'll be see more unfriendly driving conditions before winter decides it's over so watch for those problem areas, be safe and always strive to .....**Keep Your Wheels Down!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

◆◆◆◆◆ == BUY=SELL=FINN=TRADE == ◆◆◆◆◆

Email - [firstturn@comcast.net](mailto:firstturn@comcast.net) Mail - PO Box33487, Seattle, WA 98133 Ph. - 425-334-5763  
**ADS ARE FREE TO ALL MEMBERS – PLEASE NOTIFY EDITOR OF ANY CHANGES – ADS ARE SUBJECT TO REMOVAL AFTER THREE ISSUES IF SPACE IS NEEDED FOR NEWER ADS – THANK YOU**

**\* PRICE LOWERED!\*** **FOR SALE:** 1935 SAMCO Ford. Model B Ford Block; 0.030 overbore in very nice block; std.bearing crankshaft fully counterweighted & drilled for pressure oil; new babbit main & rod bearings by Dave Johnson, Wilkerson, WA; Rebuilt Bendix magneto; Barns oil pump driven off front of cam; rocker arm head by Shaw & Mercill Machine, Seattle, WA one of only two remaining example. Has run two events since rebuild, runs very well. Frame & body special built; 1932 Ford heavy front axle; Model B Ford transmission; Model A Ford rear axle (Halibrand center section); Full floating rear axles w/28 spline late axles; Early Ford hydraulic brakes (rear only); 1935 Ford wheels. 4 dirt wheels & tires; 6 pavement wheels & tires; 2 unmounted wheels. One ugly but good towing trailer, with 3 new tires & Pro Tec tool box. One spare model B block; one spare crankshaft; one spare set model B rods; one stock model A head. **\$19,000** Contact: **Jim Edwards – 425-277-0481**



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*Incorporated  
October 20, 1975  
Memories of the Past  
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**The Object of Golden Wheels Fraternity**  
Encourage the preservation of vintage auto racing.  
Promote and advance the interest of said Fraternity.  
Honor those auto racers who are no longer with us.  
Join in fellowship and camaraderie.  
Collectively render such financial assistance as possible  
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**In Memory  
of  
Jan Opperman  
and  
Silent Members  
of Golden Wheels  
Fraternity**

*anonymous*